

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 MCT-01

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-----241958 031801 /53

R 241700Z FEB 77

FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2306

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E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: PGOV,PINT,PORS, AC

SUBJ: ANTIGUA POLICE SEARCH FOR WEAPONS AND EXPLOSIVES FOLLOWING
ARRESTS OF FORMER GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

REF: BRIDGETOWN 0411

1. REPORTS OF CIVIL DISTURBANCES AND UNUSUAL POLICE
MEASURES FOLLOWING THE ARREST OF FORMER ANTIGUA GOVERNMENT
OFFICIALS HAVE CONTINUED, DESPITE DENIALS OF GOVERNMENT OF-
FICIALS AS REPORTED IN REFTEL. IN RESPONSE TO EMBASSY RE-
QUEST FOR INFORMATION, US NAVFAC IN ANTIGUA REPORTED FOL-
LOWING: "SOME UNREST MONDAY. REPORTED POLICE ACTION
NECESSARY TO BREAK UP CROWDS THAT GATHERED AT SEVERAL
LOCATIONS IN ST.JOHNS. IT WAS REPORTED THAT TEAR GAS HAD
TO BE USED ON AT LEAST ONE OCCASION. GENERALLY QUIET TODAY
AND NO DIRECTION TOWARD AMERICAN BASES OR PERSONNEL
ANTICIPATED."

2. LOCAL NEWSPAPER REPORTED THAT ANTIGUA POLICE SET UP
ROAD BLOCKS AROUND ST. JOHN'S AND DISCOVERED AND CONFIS-
CATED AN UNDISCLOSED NUMBER OF UNLICENSED GUNS. THE POLICE
WERE ALSO LOOKING FOR EXPLOSIVES IN WHAT AUTHORITIES
CALLED "JUST ANOTHER SECURITY MEASURE." THE REPORT
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QUOTED A "JUNIOR GOVERNMENT MINISTER" AS SAYING, "THE
SECURITY SQUAD IS FULLY MOBILIZED SHOULD THE SITUATION
STEP OUT OF HAND." HE SAID IT WAS COMMON KNOWLEDGE THAT
THE GOVERNMENT HAS A "SECURITY SQUAD," INDEPENDENT OF
THE ANTIGUA DEFENSE FORCE, THAT IS SPECIALLY TRAINED IN
HANDLING UPRISINGS. OPPOSITION SPOKESMEN CLAIMED IT WAS
"A SECRET ARMY BEING TRAINED IN COMBAT".

3. THE GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN REPORTEDLY REITERATED THAT MOE ARRESTS WOULD BE MADE AS A RESULT OF THE INVESTIGATION INTO THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT'S ALLEGED CORRUPTION, AND THAT THESE ARRESTS WOULD COME "LIKE A THIEF IN THE NIGHT".

4. COMMENT: THE LAST GENERAL ELECTION WAS BITTERLY CONTESTED AND RELATIONS BETWEEN THE FORMER AND PRESENT ANTIGUA GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN STRAINED FROM THE START OF THE BIRD ADMINISTRATION. THE EFFECT OF THE RECENT ARRESTS AND SECURITY MEASURES CAN ONLY BE TO POLARIZE ANTIGUAN POLITICS STILL FURTHER AND DIVIDE THE ANTIGUAN PEOPLE TO AN EVEN GREATER EXTENT. END COMMENT.
BRITTON

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Message Attributes

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Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 24-Feb-1977 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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